



## Mill Creek



Lower portion of trail as you leave the historic district.

### TRAIL HEAD DIRECTIONS

Starting at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center, drive west on Highway 299 to the Tower House Historic District parking lot, approximately 8 miles. At the end of the parking lot follow the paved trail over the Clear Creek footbridge and then turn left. Walk along the white fence and cross over the next bridge. Follow the dirt road to the left past the Tenant Farmhouse and barn. Continue past the El Dorado Mine site where the Mill Creek trailhead marker is located.

### TRAIL DESCRIPTION

The Tenant Farmhouse, the El Dorado Mine and Stamp Mill are historic structures on the Mill Creek Trail. The Stamp Mill housed an apparatus in which rock was crushed by descending pestles known as “stamps.” The mill was operated by steam power. Mercury was used to separate the gold from the crushed rock through a process called amalgamation. The technique is no longer used in the United States, as mercury has been found hazardous to human health.

Continue on the trail along Mill Creek. Pass both branches of the

### FEATURES

- 6.5 miles one way shade on Mill Creek, sun on upper slopes
- Elevation 1250 to 1600 feet; moderate to difficult
- El Dorado Mine stamp mill where gold ore was once crushed
- Tenant Farm House and restored barn
- Connects to Clear Creek Vista and Camden Water Ditch Trails

Clear Creek Vista Trail which veer off across the left of Mill Creek and up the hill. The Mill Creek Trail ascends the drainage, paralleling the creek on either side. The trail crosses the creek approximately 20 times.

The trail eventually reaches a ridge area and then descends to an old section of road where it becomes double track. Turn right (west) at this point, walking until crossing the bridge signed Mill Creek. Follow this old road as it continues up the hill, over a saddle, and descends steeply to the east fork of Crystal Creek.

After the crossing, continue up a short grade. The path levels out



The Stamp Mill houses a steam powered machine once used to crush ore.

for a short stretch. Pass the turn-off for Whiskeytown Falls. The grade descends; cross the simple plank bridge on the west fork of Clear Creek. Follow the trail up a short but steep section until reaching the trailhead parking lot on Crystal Creek Road. This trailhead is located 3.5 miles from Highway 299.

### Crystal Creek Campground Cut Off:

This is an alternative method of reaching Crystal Creek Road. The trail is a secondary, minimally maintained path that ends at the Crystal Creek Primitive Campsite. Follow trail directions **but**, shortly after crossing the bridge signed “Mill Creek”, keep a sharp look-out along the right edge of the road for an unmarked path. It is a very steep path going down the hill.

Carefully make your way down this steep path which will flatten out into a trail. The trail soon becomes relatively level. You will cross a wetland area and reach a pass/saddle area. You will be able to see the pile of rock removed during the construction of the tunnel from Lewiston Lake to Whiskeytown's Carr Powerhouse. (Look across the drainage to your right, or west). This tunnel conveys water from the Trinity



Crystal Creek Campground, site #1. The trail drops you off across the creek from this site.

River into Whiskeytown Lake, and with another diversion, eventually into the Sacramento River.

The trail crosses the east fork of Crystal Creek and descends, reaching Crystal Creek and the Crystal Creek Backcountry Campsite.



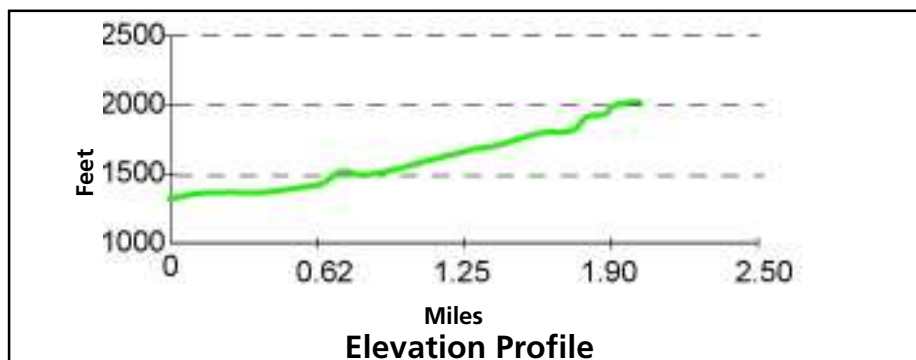


## EROSION

The term "erosion" is often characterized as negative, especially when it is accelerated by human activity. This process is part of the natural sequence of events at Whiskeytown. Heavy rains, snowfall and avalanches, trees uprooted by high winds, earthquakes, and human activity can all serve as the immediate cause of landslide erosion. The root of all landslide erosion, however, is geologic uplift and mountain-building. The more

the land is pushed up, the steeper it gets. The steeper it is, the more likely it is that something will trigger a landslide.

As you walk along the trail, look for areas that seem unstable, and look for areas that have failed. What do you suspect was the cause? Mining, road-building, logging, and flooding have all left their marks along this trail.



## SAFETY

Winter and spring creek flows can be fast, turn back if the creek is too high. Use caution when crossing wet and slippery stones.